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ANNAPOLIS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Hundreds of Pornographic Images Were of 3 to 5 Year Olds

Baltimore, Maryland - William Villeda, age 22, of Annapolis, Maryland pleaded guilty today to possession of child pornography, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to court documents, since about August 2006, Villeda downloaded through the Internet hundreds of images of children engaged in sexually explicit conduct. On two occasions in August and October, 2006 an undercover officer, using file sharing software on-line, located several files on Villeda's computer containing pornographic images of minors, including toddlers, which Villeda had made available to share on-line. In November 2006, federal officers searched Villeda's residence and recovered child pornography from his computer and several computer disks. Many of the hundreds of pornographic images recovered were of three to five year old children.

Villeda faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, followed by a maximum of lifetime supervised release for possession of child pornography. U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz has scheduled sentencing for March 22, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the investigative work performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel J. Fortune, who is prosecuting the case.
